

What should I be concerned about when creating a blended family?

The blending of families is a common and yet challenging task for parents. It's not uncommon for children to be leery and distant regarding the new situation until they have had time to process the change and adjust. Although parents may be eager to have their children form new relationships with the new family members, this should not be rushed. Allow the relationships to evolve slowly and over time. Providing your children with space and flexibility to adjust to the new situation will ultimately benefit the entire family. It is helpful for parents to continue spending one on one time with their children and if the children are comfortable, stepparents as well. When melding two families, it's important to maintain traditions and rituals that were established previously as well as creating new traditions surrounding the new family setting.

Parents are encouraged to establish a unified parenting approach for the new family to be used consistently to avoid their children's possible perception of favoritism. Stepparents should avoid disciplining their partner's children as this could cause resentment within the family.

Holding family meetings allows family members to express their opinions and communicate with one another openly. It is helpful for parents to allow their children to have input about the household rules and planning of family activities so that they feel important and connected to one another. The success of blended families is a continually evolving process, but it starts with the parents' ability to communicate and promote understanding.